Introduction:

Tourism is a fast growing industry in Kerala. It has come to occupy a prominent place in the economy of this costal state that its future prosperity is inextricably bound with this tantalizing source of income to the state exchequer. The growth potential of this sector has already been ascertained by the state Government with the help of experts and a lot of importance is being given for tourism promotion. The new policy of the state Government in this regard attracts even Multi - Nationals to venture into the sector Alappuzha District is highly conducive to Tourism Development in the state. The Presence of Lakes, lagoons and Backwaters and the fascinating natural scenery of the District has enchanted tourists and naturalists from time immemorial. However, the basic infrastructural facilities which includes; transport and Communication, roads, hotels and resorts are much too inadequate for a consistent growth of tourism in the area. Therefore, the researcher feels that a survey Research in this sensitive field will be of considerable use for the promotion of tourism in the District. This will, not only enhances the GDP of the state but also generate employment opportunities for a large number of the unemployed Youth. It is also learnt that no substantial study and analysis has been carried out so far in this vital sector.

Objectives of the study:

1) To study the nature and extent of the infrastructural facilities such as roads, rails and water transportation etc to meet the demands of the fast growing tourism in the district and identifying the gaps, if any.
2) To ascertain the influence of the traditional boat races in tourism development in Alappuzha.
3) To evaluate the role played by the Government Tourism Department, Private Resorts, House Boats, Alappuzha Beach, Pilgrim Centres in Alappuzha for the promotion of tourism in Alappuzha district.
4) To make suitable suggestions for the promotion of tourism in Alappuzha district.

Hypothesis of the study:

The basic infrastructural facilities such as: roads, rails and water transportation facilities in Alappuzha do not have a significant influence in meeting the demands of the fast growing tourism in the district.

Methodology of the study:

A Survey Research Design is used for the detailed study.

1) Population

Alappuzha District of Kerala State Constitute the Population / Universe for the study.

To facilitate the study, data were gathered through scientific methods from

1) Officials of the State Tourism Development Corporation
2) Officials of the State Public Work Department
3) Officers of the State Roads and Water Transport Department
4) The general public of Alppuzha
5) Organizers of the traditional boat races in the area
6) Proprietors of the house boats in Alappuzha
7) Owners and executives of Private resorts in the locality
8) Local leaders and representatives of the political parties
9) Visiting or Floating Tourists of the area

Sampling technique:

a) For gathering information from the general public stratified Random sampling Method was used
b) To collect information from the Government officials and Political leaders Simple random Sampling method was used
c) Accidental Sampling technique was used for Gathering data from the visiting tourists

Tools for data Collections

Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary data were gathered by means of

- Questionnaires
- Schedules
- Personal Interview

- Telephonic Interview
- Snap shots and
- Observations

Secondary data were gathered from

- Government Records / Reports
- Website Visiting
- Journals and Magazines

Sample Size:

1)	Officials of Govt Tourism Dept	25
2)	Officials of the Public Work Dept	25
3)	Officials of the State Roads Transport Dept	25
4)	General Public	200
5)	Organizers of the Traditional Boat Races	25
6)	Proprietors of House Boats	25
7)	Owners / executives of Private resorts	50
8)	Local leaders / Representatives of the Political Parties	50
9)	Visiting Tourists	50
	Total size	500

Analysis and Discussions:

This study purports to make a thorough research into the tourism facilities, possibilities and potentialities in the district of Alappuzha. The data gathered were analyzed using scientifical and statistical methods and logical conclusions have been arrived at . From this, elucidations have been made and the major findings drawn and suitable suggestions put forth.

Major findings and suggestions:

- Forty two per cent of the tourists are found to be far from satisfied with the infrastructural facilities such as: roads, rails, water transportation, air-services, telecommunication, hotels and resorts provided here. The existing telecommunication facilities such as: Internet, On-line ticket booking facilities, Tourists information systems, Tourism organizers' supportive systems are found to be quite inadequate for the requirement of the visiting tourists.
- The basic facilities provided at the railway station are not up to the standard. The number of trains passing through Alappuzha is quite inadequate for the smooth flow of tourists. Lack of basic amenities there such as: accommodation, cloak rooms, luxury waiting rooms, parking arrangements, less number of ticket counters act as a deterrent to the tourists. The agonizing delay of trains, felt by the travelers is another factor.
- Alappuzha has a network of approach roads and link roads. These roads are not properly maintained. Hasty construction work by unwilling contractors does more harm to the roads than good. Road traveling is often a harrowing experience for the tourists.
- The Vada canal and Commercial canal, which are the main transportation routes of tourists, are found to be very unhygienic owing to the heavy dumping of human, animal and other wastes. Besides huge deposit of silt from the frequent gush of sea water makes these canals dirties. Slaughter houses on the river banks deposit animal waste into the rivers. All these make water transportation very difficult.
- Communication difficulties are another major problem faced by the tourists coming to Alappuzha. Since the tourists can not follow the local language-Malayalam, they have to depend on English. But the large population of Alappuzha, which include shop keepers, taxi or auto drivers can not understand English well, which again makes the situation worse. The tourists do not face such problems in Kochi, Trivandrum or in any other states.

- Lack of adequate number of trained and authorized guides is another stumbling block. In the study, it is found that many unauthorized guides are there in the town who canvass the tourists, succeed in winning their trust and take them to the tourist spots. These people not only charge a very high amount as fee from the tourists but also there are instances in which these unauthorized guides even misbehaved with the tourists.
- The poor and unhygienic condition of the Beach at Alappuzha is another deterrent. The Alappuzha Beach has been a major attraction for the visiting tourists since time immemorial. The infrastructural facilities including the park created in the past remain as it is in spite of the phenomenal increase in the number of tourists visiting Alappuzha. It is also found that the to and fro transportation facilities to the Beach is also poor and inadequate.
- In spite of all these disenchantments, the study revealed that Alappuzha is still the most attractive tourists' spot in Kerala. The boat races conducted during the monsoon season have a significant influence on the development of tourism. These aquatic festivals promote a sense of unity, fraternity and sportsman spirit among the people of Alappuzha as well as among the visiting tourists.

Suggestions:

We have now come to the most vital part of the study viz, making some well-considered suggestions on the rapidly moving tourism industry in Alappuzha.

- Government should realize the very bright potential of Alappuzha for tourism and should take the lead in bringing as many tourism related projects as possible to Alappuzha for the rapid promotion of tourism.
- The unstinted cooperation of the central and state government tourism proprietors and the people of Alappuzha must be made for the promotion of tourism in the district. The assistance of the financial bodies of the government should also be guaranteed.
- In order to monitor the activities aimed at promoting tourism, a committee consisting of representatives from the central and state governments,

Alappuzha tourists proprietors and associations in equal number should be formed.

- Alappuzha district should be divided into different segments on the basis of its tourism potential and suitable projects need to be carried out in each segment.
- Segments with greater potential should be identified and special projects designed and carried out there.
- A common package exclusively for Alappuzha should be devised and brought into effect. This package should aim at the complete development of each segment into which it would be divided. This task should be completed with the selfless support of the general public of Alappuzha under the direct supervision of the government.
- A special policy should be formulated exclusively for tourism in Alappuzha. It should be completely free from political interference.
- A tourism development committee should come into existence at Alappuzha. It should have strong proportional representation from the state government, private agencies and the people of Alappuzha. There should be a central council to monitor the activities of this committee periodically.